

## Thousands Jam Birthday Balls; Mrs. Roosevelt Cuts Cake

It was midnight and President Roosevelt's 63d birthday was ending. Thousands of persons jammed into nine hot ballrooms all over the city, and other crowds who lined hotel halls and entrances chanted "Happy Birthdays." Mrs. Roosevelt sliced into a huge birthday cake, a weary crowd of Hollywood entertainers smiled mechanically, and members of the committee staging the balls began estimating how far over last year's total the fund, raised to fight infantile paralysis, had gone this year.

Earlier in the evening, before Mrs. Roosevelt began her tour of all the balls, she read over a Nation-wide hookup, expressing regret that he could not speak personally, and praising the infantile paralysis drive as "an investment in our country's future and an assertion of our American birthright to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The balls, which continued two hours into today, climaxed a two-day celebration with numerous activities held for the benefit of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. Most of them were complete sellouts, and although bands played between the appearances of the stars, there was little room for dancing and mostly the crowds hugged close to the stages waiting for the next celebrity to appear.

All of the ballrooms were jammed enough to be steamy. At the Stage Door Canteen the soldier audience chanted "turn off the heat"—until the air-conditioning unit was turned on; girls kicked off their slippers to cool their feet; one woman fainted; at the Mayflower one member of the orchestra passed ice cubes from a glass of water to the perspiring audience, and the glaring spotlights made perspiration drip from the movie stars on the stage.

### Crowds Wait Outside.

Crowds of persons filled the lobbies of the hotels and lined the streets outside, screaming at each cab that drew up and pushing impatiently at the policemen who held them back. Outside the Stage Door Canteen servicemen waited in a four-deep line which at 9 o'clock extended a block. They were hoping to get inside, but by 11 only 50 optimists remained. In order to take care of as many as they did, the canteen had to refuse to allow women service personnel to come in. The biggest event of the evening was at the Statler Hotel when all of the stars crowded the stage while Mrs. Roosevelt cut the three-tiered birthday cake. After the stars had been given slices, and some of them had chipped off the blue sugar birds for souvenirs, the cake was wheeled off and today will be sent to the children in the infantile paralysis ward at Gallinger Hospital.

Although the stars had a carefully worked out schedule and were slated to appear for only a few minutes at each ball, the program got fouled up somewhat because the audiences just wouldn't let the entertainers leave. They clapped and screamed while backstage managers clock-watched, and other stars waiting to appear patted impatient feet. At the Waldorf Park Hotel Joe E. Brown reminded the crowd "people are trying to sleep upstairs" but they only howled louder. Monty Woolley, who tried the hardest to stick to schedule, told his audiences, "I have 30 seconds to talk. That gives me more pleasure than it does you"—but at several places they applauded him so long he smiled.

somewhat reluctantly, and stayed longer.

Each audience had different favorites among the stars. The Statler crowd, which was the biggest, kept Danny Kaye dancing and singing for more than half an hour.

The Stage Door Canteen audience gave the most rapt attention to Susanna Foster, sitting silently until the last of her long high notes had died away.

At the Mayflower, the audience which overflowed the balconies and steps, seemed to like Margaret O'Brien and Gene Kelly best of the lot.

The O'Brien-Kelly team shared top honors with Kay Kyser at the Lincoln Colonnade, and the audience cheered so long for 8-year-old Margaret that she did an encore, reciting the story of the Nativity. Charles Bickford's rendition of the prayer of an American soldier over the grave of his dead Jewish buddy also got a big response from the Colonnade audience.

The audiences couldn't seem able to decide which of the actresses was most appealing. Veronica Lake neglected her siren manner to make an earnest plea for the infantile paralysis fund, "not as an actress but as a mother"—and her audiences applauded heartily. Linda Darnell couldn't say a word to her Shoreham Hotel audience for several minutes, until the howling quieted down. When she gave them a long, slow look, it started again.

### "Glamour Girls" Popular.

Myrna Loy just waved her hands, smiled and told them "she was just a talking actress," but they didn't seem to mind. If there were any favorites, they were the girls who combined glamour and music—Georgia Carroll, Jane Wyman, Gale Storm, Ella Logan and Miss Foster. All of the actresses wore low-cut dresses, mostly white or black, and all won several minutes of shrill whistling.

Adan Ladd was the one who won most of the female sighs that corresponded to the men's whistling. He ducked shyly and blushed and his wife, Sue Carol, had to coax him to sing at each place. Victor Borge read his oratory punctuated "Shakespeare" to the delight of each audience.

At 1:45 the last of the troupe was taking bows, stretching aching muscles and exchanging comments on the evening. They agreed with Gale Storm that "wasn't it wonderful?"—but they also agreed with Denny Kaye's answer: "Yeah, honey, but let's don't do it again until next year."

The people outside who had laughed and clapped and yelled until they too were exhausted seemed to agree with the little girl in bobble socks outside the Statler Hotel, who hugged an autograph book and sighed contentedly. "Well, it's all over now—but what a night!"

## Russia

(Continued From First Page.)

and German escape to the sea had been blocked there. The Berlin communique disclosed Russian forces had penetrated above Schneidemühl to within some 60 miles of Koslin at the Baltic, saying Soviet reconnaissance elements were counterattacked north of Flatow and north of Krone. These towns are, respectively, 18 miles northeast and 14 northwest of Schneidemühl. The bulletin also declared that



**BIRTHDAY CAKE CUT**—Mrs. Roosevelt and Hollywood stars paused in their tour of the President's seven birthday parties here to slice this huge cake in the Statler Hotel ballroom. With Mrs. Roosevelt are (left to right): Joe E. Brown, Jane Wyman, Myrna Loy and George Murphy, and Margaret O'Brien (foreground).

strong German forces had fought their way back from the area of Kalisz, big Soviet-captured town southeast of Poznan in Poland. These Germans prevented Russians south of Leszno from crossing the Oder and have destroyed more than 230 Russian tanks since January 18, the communique added.

Large numbers of Germans, including elderly men and boys, were reported in a dispatch from Moscow to be moving up from Berlin to the Oder to make a stand there in defense of the capital.

The German announcement of the arrival of the Russians at Zielienzig came only a few hours after a Russian communique had announced the capture of Stolzenberg by Zhukov's forces in a 20-mile dash down the Netze River Valley from Driesen.

Both Moscow and Berlin commented on the bitter cold in the battle zone. Moscow said Soviet forces were sweeping straight ahead toward Berlin with the thermometer reported almost 20 degrees below zero in Germany. Berlin, beset with a pressing refugee problem, said the weather on the eastern front was "of the unimaginable fury of a natural catastrophe."

The German radio said the severe cold, in which "our helpless women and children are fleeing before the Russians," had frozen lakes and streams, facilitating Russian crossings. The Germans were blasting the ice in some places.

Nazi broadcasts mentioned Kurtna as Zhukov's immediate objective, but already his troops were chanting "Dayosch Berlin!" (roughly translated, "We take Berlin!"; more literally it indicates a nonstop drive

until the capital falls). Zhukov's officers, it was reported, had been furnished with new maps of the capital area.

In Budapest, the German communique said, the besieged Nazi garrison continues to defend itself against "ferocious Russian attacks."

## Stettinius

(Continued From First Page.)

that several additional conferences were held before the two departed today.

There apparently was every intention of showing that the visit of Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Stettinius to Allied headquarters was strictly an American affair, without any bearing on the political situations in Italy and Greece.

Gen. Sir Harold Alexander, Allied supreme commander in the Mediterranean, was not mentioned in the announcement. Harold MacMillan, British resident minister at Allied Mediterranean headquarters, was reported to be in Athens, which incidentally was the only place Hopkins definitely told the press he did not intend to visit.

Aside from De Gasperi, no other Italian government officials were known to have talked with either Mr. Hopkins or Mr. Stettinius.

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## 14 Blocks Evacuated In Benzol Plant Fire

By the Associated Press.

CLEVELAND, Jan. 31.—Flames which followed a triple explosion last night at the \$2,000,000 benzol division of the Corrigan-McKinney works of the Republic Steel Corp. were controlled early today, and 400 families evacuated from a 14-block area around the fire began returning to their homes.

Company officials said damage would reach several hundred thousand dollars.

No one was injured. The families were moved out as burning naphthalene on the ground threatened to carry the flames into coke oven

batteries. Steam was turned into the fire batteries to lessen the fire danger.

Plant Manager J. L. Highland said the cause of the explosions was unknown. Fire apparatus from all parts of downtown Cleveland, including a Coast Guard fireboat, was called to the scene.

Three companies—Standard Oil, Jones & Laughlin and Republic Steel—"pooled" their fire-fighting chemicals to battle the flames.

A company spokesman said the blast and fire would not affect operation of nearby open-hearth furnaces. He said that two of the plant's four operating blast furnaces were "t down for lack of coke."

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## Warner Marriage Annulled

VENTURA, Calif., Jan. 31 (AP).—The Mexican marriage of Actress Anne Sterling and Thomas Warner, Jr., member of the auto parts manufacturing family, has been annulled. Miss Sterling obtained the annulment here yesterday. She testified that when they were married in Tijuana last October 11 Mr. Warner had not yet obtained a final divorce decree from his former wife, Jean MacDonald Warner.

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**RUSSIANS SWEEP TOWARD BERLIN**—Arrows indicate the Red Army's unchecked drive along the eastern front, where the Russians were reported by the German radio to have reached Zielienzig, 55 miles from Greater Berlin. In the north the Reds tightened pressure on Konigsberg. There were no official reports from Silesia, in the south, but there were indications the Russians were crossing the Oder River in strength in that area. —AP Wirephoto.

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